

Michael F. Easley  
Governor



State of North Carolina  
Office of the Governor

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**EASLEY DECLARES HOPE MILLS A DISASTER AREA, PLEDGES TO RE-BUILD DAM**

**RALEIGH** – Gov. Mike Easley today declared the Town of Hope Mills a state disaster area, clearing the way for state financial aid to help rebuild the Hope Mills Dam and the adjacent roadway and bridge that were destroyed following heavy rains on Memorial Day weekend.

“This has been a devastating loss for Hope Mills, and we are trying to see whether funds are available to pay the full recovery costs for the town,” Easley said. The state typically covers 75 percent of such a loss, and the municipality pays the remainder.

Hope Mills qualifies for a Type 1 Disaster Declaration and is eligible to receive state disaster aid in the form of grant assistance to make repairs on infrastructure and public facilities. Total rebuilding costs are estimated at \$5,866,210. In addition, the town has spent \$39,500 on various emergency protective measures, an expense which is also eligible for state aid.

“I am committed to assisting Hope Mills rebuild from this disaster,” Easley said. “With a new dam, the citizens of Hope Mills can again have the vibrant town park and lake they have enjoyed for so many years. The recreation area is also a plus for future economic development.”

State and local damage assessment teams, assisted by officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, examined the damage and tallied the cost to re-build during several visits to the area over the past two weeks.

During the Memorial Day weekend, a series of thunderstorms dumped four to six inches of rain in less than 24 hours in Cumberland and Hoke counties. The rainfall overloaded Big Rockfish Creek in Hoke County, and Little Rockfish and Buckhead creeks in Cumberland County. The resulting flash floods affected several homes, eroded two roads and caused four dams to fail.

Combined damages for the facilities were not high enough to meet criteria for a federal disaster declaration, and the privately owned dams are not eligible for government assistance. The Hope Mills Dam qualifies for a state level disaster because the town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, damage exceeds \$10,000 and the damage is greater than one-half of one percent of the town’s budget.

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